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ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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March 25, 2003

JOHN CONYERS, JR., Michigan
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The Honorable John D. Ashcroft
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
10th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I was deeply disturbed to learn from newspaper accounts that, on the last day of your authority over immigration matters, you granted the Federal Bureau of Investigation the authority to arrest individuals for technical immigration violations and that you authorized thousands of FBI agents to conduct an expanded interview program targeting individuals who have fled Iraq to come to the United States. At a time when the FBI should have as its primary mission a focused effort to prevent terrorist acts, this use of resources for an investigative fishing expedition seems unwise.

A program of expanded arrest authority and interrogation by the FBI would seem to provide little or no law enforcement benefit and comes at a substantial cost. Similar arrests of Muslims and Arabs on technical immigration violations occurred in the wake of September 11. To my knowledge, the Department has yet to identify a single terrorist that was apprehended as a result of those arrests. Likewise, Muslims and Arab Americans were subjected to "voluntary" interviews (many feared reprisals if they did not agree to the interviews and, therefore, did not feel the interviews were voluntary) in the wake of September 11 and the Department, despite repeated requests by my office and the General Accounting Office, has yet to identify a single useful piece of information about terrorism that was adduced as a result of these interviews.

While you have provided no evidence of any benefit of this approach, the costs associated with these programs have been enormous. This approach has diverted scarce investigative

The Honorable John D. Ashcroft
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It is now more important than ever that the administration avoid sending contradictory signals about our nation's commitment to civil liberties. I, therefore, would request that you immediately provide me with any guidance or procedures the Department has promulgated for these interviews immediately and a report by May 25, 2003 of any information adduced from these interviews.

Please reply to my Committee Office at B-351C Rayburn House Office Building and also fax to Perry Apfelbaum and Ted Kalo at 225-4423 concerning the details about the new FBI arrest and interview policy. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member

cc: Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Honorable Jamie Brown, OLA, DOJ

F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR., Wisconsin
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April 30, 2003

JOHN CONYERS, JR., Michigan
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

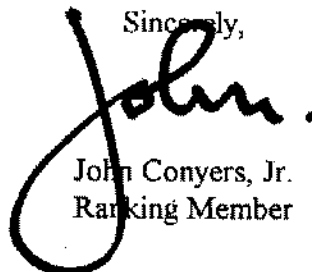
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The Honorable John D. Ashcroft
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
10th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC ~~20510~~ 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

The enclosed letter was sent on March 25 and inexplicably returned by the post office. I am resending the letter and would appreciate a response.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner
The Honorable Dan Bryant

Enclosure